

# Louisiana

## Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

### State Contact information

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Assistance Specialist</b></p> <p>NAME: Bruce Daniels, Adoptions Program Director</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:bdaniels@dss.state.la.us">bdaniels@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.4086</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Genita M. Hunter</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:ghunter@dss.state.la.us">ghunter@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.2844</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Program Manager Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Connie S. Billiodeau, AdoptUSKids, Purchase of Service Contracts</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:cbilliod@dss.state.la.us">cbilliod@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.4040</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Leola McClinton</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:lmcclint@dss.state.la.us">lmcclint@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.4034</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Post Adoption Services Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Susan Bueche, Program Manager, Louisiana Adoption Registry</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:sbueche@dss.state.la.us">sbueche@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.2844; Adoption Registry @ 800.259.2456</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medical Assistance Specialist</b></p> <p>NAME: Janice Washington</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social Services Office of Community Services P.O. Box 3318 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:jwashington@dss.state.la.us">jwashington@dss.state.la.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 225.342.4068</p>

## **Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?**

**A good place to start.** Public adoption in Louisiana is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Community Services (OCS). Louisiana's DSS and OCS links: [www.dss.state.la.us/](http://www.dss.state.la.us/) and [www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/child\\_welfare.html#Adoption\\_Services](http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/child_welfare.html#Adoption_Services).

- 1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? ("What is your state definition of special needs?")**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- African American male infant or older; African American female five years of age or older; Caucasian male eleven years of age or older; Caucasian female twelve years of age or older
- Ethnicity or national origin
- Member of a sibling group of two or more children who should not be separated
- Physical, mental or emotional disability
- Medical condition

Note: Children must be legally free for adoption to be eligible for adoption assistance

- 2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above, legally free for adoption, and in the custody of the state of Louisiana (foster care). Additionally, the adoptive family must undergo an income analysis often referred to as a means test. The income analysis is conducted to determine if the adoptive family's resources exceed state eligibility requirements.

- 3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$1000.00 per child

Note: Reimbursement of non-recurring expenses at this upper limit is not automatic. The reimbursement rate is negotiated based on the usual and customary amount paid for "one-time" adoption expenses in that specific region or area.

- 4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both, and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Louisiana does not offer deferred adoption assistance.

- 5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?**

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Louisiana on the first day of the month after the adoption petition is filed with the court.

## **6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?**

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoptive families may request changes to the adoption assistance agreement at any time and whenever the needs of the child or the circumstances of the family change. Adoptive parents are directed to contact their adoption assistance worker in the region of origin to discuss these changing circumstances and to request a modification to the adoption assistance agreement as needed. The Offices of Community Services directory link is: [www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/OCS\\_Directory.html](http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/OCS_Directory.html)

Federally funded adoption assistance (Title IV-E) must be reviewed at least every five years up until the child turns eighteen years of age. State funded adoption assistance must be redetermined at least annually until the child turns eighteen years of age.

## **Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services**

### **7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?**

Post-adoption services in Louisiana are administered by the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services (OCS) and include the following examples:

- |                             |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Information and referral | 4. Support programs         | 7. Respite                    |
| 2. Educational programs     | 5. Therapeutic intervention | 8. Resource libraries         |
| 3. Educational materials    | 6. Advocacy                 | 9. Voluntary Reunion Registry |

Louisiana funds ten Family Resource Centers throughout the state and holds yearly adoption conferences sponsored by the Louisiana Adoption Advisory Board. There is no centralized intake or website available that provides information relative to the Family Resource Centers, however specific information can be obtained by contacting the Regional Program Specialist housed in the in the local regional office. Additionally, several parent organizations such as the Foster/Adoptive Parent Association and the Foster/Adoptive Parent Resource Centers offer adoption support services. One such group, F.A.I.R. Visions, Inc. (Foster Adoptive Information & Resources), operating out of Monroe, LA, sponsors support groups in rural areas, phone: 318.340.02030.

Many private organizations offer a variety of respite options. See Louisiana's Respite Programs, link: [www.respitelocator.org/lstates.htm](http://www.respitelocator.org/lstates.htm). The Offices of Community Services (local regional offices) link: [www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/OCS\\_Directory.html](http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/OCS_Directory.html)

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker, post adoption services specialist, or local regional office for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance**

### **8. What mental health services are provided by your state?**

Public mental health services for children in Louisiana are administered by the Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Health Services Financing (Medicaid). Mental health services are provided through the EPSDT Psychological and Behavioral Services Interim Program for eligible children. Services include the following examples: evaluations, family education and training, clinical intervention, periodic follow up, linkages to emergency mental health services in crisis situations, and psychological services.

Medicaid Services link: [www.dhh.state.la.us/MEDICAID/services.htm](http://www.dhh.state.la.us/MEDICAID/services.htm). See the heading entitled, *EPSDT Psychological and Behavioral Services (PBS), Interim Program only* in the table under services or phone the Referral Assistance Hotline at 1.877.455.9955.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

### **9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?**

Louisiana provides additional services to meet the special pre-existing needs of child receiving adoption assistance through its *Special Service Subsidies*. *Special Service Subsidies* are authorized when no other resource or benefit, public or private, is available to meet the child's anticipated need for a specific service(s). Service needs are assessed and documented by a specialist and should include treatment type, duration and cost. If it is determined that the child's condition or circumstance make it difficult to predetermine treatment costs, service funding may be granted for an unspecified sum. *Special Service Subsidy* includes the following examples: prescription medication, physical or speech therapy, psychiatric/psychological care, customized physical devices/equipment, and training necessary to meet the particular needs of the child.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings**

### **10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.**

Adoptive parents who are in disagreement with the agency's (OCS) decision relative to their adoption assistance application request, or who feel that their civil rights were violated in the process, may appeal the agency's decision by requesting a fair hearing. The adoption assistance application and notification of decision provide directions for this process. The fair hearing process is thoroughly reviewed with all adoption assistance applicants by the adoption assistance worker as a matter of agency practice. The adoption assistance application form itself may be used to request a fair hearing appeal. Requests are to be made in writing by the adoptive parent within thirty days from receipt of their written notification of the agency's final adoption assistance decision. Upon notification of the adoptive parent's request, the Appeals Section will schedule the fair hearing and notify all concerned parties in writing of the hearing date, time

and location. Adoptive parents may represent themselves at the hearing, or they may authorize someone else to assist them, such as legal counsel, relative, friend or other spokesperson. Fair Hearing decisions are binding.

Adoptive parents may send their appeal requests either to the local regional Office of Community Services or directly to the following address:

DSS Appeals Section  
P.O. Box 2944  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70821

## **Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information**

### **11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?**

Louisiana's general adoption link:

[www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/child\\_welfare.html#Adoption\\_Services](http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/child_welfare.html#Adoption_Services)

### **12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?**

Louisiana does not have an adoption assistance-specific link.

### **13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?**

Louisiana's state-specific medical assistance link: [www.dhh.state.la.us/MEDICAID/index.htm](http://www.dhh.state.la.us/MEDICAID/index.htm).